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The Making of a Forester

by Dave Young

The SUCCESSFUL, happy forester is truly a unique individual. A deep love for the world of nature, a natural curiosity, and inventiveness, and superior strength of character enable him to tackle the challenging tasks that are always before him. His profession is often beset by conflicting interests, misunderstanding, and the wealth of the well-meaning but ignorant. He does not always line long enough to enjoy all the fruits of his labor. Yet he so strongly believes in the worth of what he is doing that his spirit is never broken.

Behind every such individual lies the forestry school—a primary influence in his development. We at Iowa State are rightfully proud of our department and the attitude that prevails within it. We like to think that we have something here which is duplicated nowhere else.

Of those who started the long haul in Forestry 101 (finishing their term papers at 3:30 a.m. the day due!), many found to their surprise that becoming a forester involved getting an intensive, top-flight education. There were such obstacles as chem, math, English, and even a course in slide rule. Grading wasn't easy, either. By golly, those profs expected you to really know your stuff! For a few the going was too rough. They sought their fortunes elsewhere. But if a guy [or gal] stuck it out, applying himself diligently, while taking time off from the grind once in a while to enjoy himself, meet his fellow foresters, and look ahead a little, he found himself very attached to the place. Yes, even the 8 o'clocks, Union coffee, and the

coeds! If he was smart he made it a point to get to know his adviser, and this relationship proved of great value.

Finally came spring quarter, and at a meeting over in Curtiss one evening he was told that the summer to come would constitute one of the great adventures of his life. Then the weeks couldn't pass too quickly.

Arriving at camp he found himself among the group of young men [and women] with whom he was to live, work, play, and study for the eight weeks to come. Before he was through he would be able to climb in and out of those *\$&! trucks with his eyes closed! He was to learn many practical lessons in group and individual behavior as well as forestry. Most of all he was to have his eyes opened to the full scope of the profession. He had a chance to see his academic training come to life. He found out what forestry work was really like through visiting and talking with professionals in many areas of management and utilization. Previously heard take of "multiple use", "rotation age", "edgers", and "board" feet per acre now became a reality.

Our forester also learned a great many things about "getting a job done". One funny thing was that some of the guys who were only average students back in Ames showed up as outstanding leaders when it came time for the crew to get a traverse run properly. A few of the real "ace-outs" just had one h— of a time learning to throw that *\$%&! chain; He saw how different men behaved when things weren't going right, and how often in their haste, they cared more for the answer than

the method. He felt the satisfaction of a full day of cruising with a good friend, and learned to find North by Polaris.

Chances are he spent some of his time becoming acquainted with the local beverages and "scenery". He enjoyed himself, but remembered that he represented Iowa State to the natives.

At summer camp, he had learned the crux of forestry, and made many friends, some of whom were to be lifelong. Many precious memories were carried back to Ames.

Now well-oriented and enthusiastic, he tackled three years to come. By this time he had learned that the only way to study was to get behind first. Accomplishing this presented no problems whatsoever! But, with "Doc" Aikman throwing 15-16 trees at him per week, he found he was kept on the go. Then there were those other tidbits like calculus and organic chemistry. One of the seniors under the "old" catalog told him, "Man, I'm glad I got started before they began shooting all these guys into space!" Inwardly, he was proud of being in a substantial curriculum that was no snap. He worked hard, and found additional pleasure and satisfaction in becoming active in the Forestry Club and other campus activities. Through these things, he gained self-confidence and invaluable know-how in effective cooperation in getting a job done.

By the end of his sophomore year and the trials and tribulations of mensuration, he felt he was really on his way to becoming a forester. The challenge of his first summer job was a fascinating one. Perhaps

he worked on Forest Service Inventory, as a forestry or range aid, or for a wood-using industry somewhere. Whatever he did, he had a chance to apply a bit of what he had learned, and had his eyes further opened to how much he still needed to learn.

Continuing with his education, he began to get more and more into the heart of forestry. His last two years were filled with the particulars of sil-

viculture, range, management and economics, products, "photos", and courses in humanities to help him develop into a perceptive, useful citizen. Concurrently, his experience widened as he made more acquaintances and undertook to plan his future. There were many decisions to be made, and many uncertainties confronting our future forester. His morale fluctuated, sometimes by the hour. But he kept "his feet on the

ground and his head in the sky," and before he knew it he was looking into interviews, civil service exams, and writing hopeful letters to prospective employers.

Sheepskin in hand, he departed from his Alma Mater to do his real learning—on the job. Finals were over, but the biggest test of all was yet to come.

Reprinted from the 1963 Ames Forester.

The Trees

The poplar is a French tree,
A tall and laughing wench tree,
A slender tee, a tender tree,
That whispers in the rain—
An easy, breezy flapper tree,
A lithe and blithe and dapper tree,
A girl of trees, a pearl of trees,
Beside the shallow Aisne.

The oak is a Brittish tree,
And not at all a skittish tree,
A rough tree, a tough tree,
A knotty tree to bruise;
A drives-his-roots-in-deep tree,
And what-I-find-I-keep tree,
A tree of stubborn thews.

The pine tree is our own tree,
a grown tree, a cone tree,
The tree to face a bitter wind,
The tree for mast and spar—
A mountain tree, a fine tree,
A fragrant turpentine tree,
A limber tree, a timber tree,
And resinous with tar!

—Christopher Morley.

Reprinted from the 1943 Ames Forester.

